GROUPS
Weekly Message Study Guide



TITLE: ***"Imagine A Place"***

OPENING QUESTION: Imagine a place from your childhood you can still picture clearly - - like a kitchen, a church, or a favorite fishing spot - - and what made it feel special?

Matthew 5:13-16 *– "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."*

GROUP QUESTION: Jesus says "you **ARE** the salt . . . you **ARE** the light". He doesn't say, "try to become". How does that change the way you see your role, and New Walk's role, in our community? How does this tie back to our previous discussions about gifts from God and being a part of God's agenda?

GROUP QUESTION: Salt that loses its saltiness still looks like salt. What are the signs that a believer still looks the part but has lost their "saltiness"? Why do you think Jesus warns that useless salt gets "thrown out and trampled"? What does a church lose when it stops making a difference?

NEW WALK IS A PLACE . . .

. . . Where people searching for hope in life FIND HOPE IN JESUS.

Isaiah 40:26-31 *– Look up into the heavens. Who created all the stars? He brings them out like an army, one after another, calling each by its name. Because of his great power and incomparable strength, not a single one is missing. O Jacob, how can you say the Lord does not see your troubles? O Israel, how can you say God ignores your rights? Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless. Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fail in exhaustion. But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.*

GROUP QUESTION: Israel complained that God didn't see their troubles. Have you ever felt that way? What brought you back to hope? What is a practical way for you to use that experience to help someone who is feeling hopeless?

John 3:16 *– For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

GROUP QUESTION: If someone without hope asked you what John 3:16 means for them, how would you explain it in your own words? Isaiah 40 gives strength for today, and John 3:16 gives hope for eternity. Which do you need more right now?

. . . Of TRANSFORMATION.

2 Corinthians 5:17 *– Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

GROUP QUESTION: Is there a before and after in your life, or in the life of someone you love, that you can point to? (Meaning, before Jesus and after Jesus.)

John 10:10 *– The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

GROUP QUESTION: Jesus contrasts the thief, who came to steal and destroy, with himself who gives life "to the full". What does a full life in Christ look like in your season of life?

. . . For CHILDREN.

Mark 10:13-16 *– "I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.*

GROUP QUESTION: What does it mean to receive the kingdom "like a child"? Why do adults so often need to be reminded of this?

. . . Where PASSION AND OBEDIENCE makes the difference.

John 10:11-13 *– "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep."*

GROUP QUESTION: The hired hand cares nothing for the sheep and runs away when the wolf comes. The good shepherd stays because the sheep are his. What's the difference between serving out of duty and serving out of love? Where might you be more "hired hand" than "shepherd"? Jesus' obedience cost him his life. What has obedience cost you?

GROUP QUESTION: Think about someone who served you like a true shepherd. What sets them apart?

CLOSING GROUP QUESTION/CHALLENGE:

GROUP QUESTION: Who in your life needs this kind of place right now? Take a moment, pray for them by name, and ask God to make you a part of the answer.